

# THE BRAHMAVÂDIN.

“एकं सत् विप्राबहुधावदन्ति.”

“That which exists is One: sages call it variously.”—*Rigveda*, I. 164. 46.

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### MITRA AND VARUNA

1. There where they let go the Sun's horses, your Law is firmly encompassed by Law. Ten hundred stood together; I saw that one, the greatest among the glorious gods.

2. O Mitra and Varuna, this is the excellence of your greatness,—the ever-moving draws forth by days the ever standing, and all increase the glory of him who moves away of himself. The smile fully of your Chariot-wheel has rolled along hither.

3. O ye Mitra and Varuna, who gladden your friends and bestow vigour and vitality on all, by your greatness you uphold heaven and earth, cause the plants to flourish, make the cattle abundant, and send down the rainflood.

4. Let well-harnessed horses bear you hither. Let them come near with well controlled reins. The body of the waters follows you behind, and ancient rivers flow along near us.

5. O Mitra and Varuna, making the glory of your form to shine more and more, and protecting the earth as a sacrifice is protected by the sacred formula (*Yajus*), full of abundance, and endowed with power, you are seated inside the sacrificial ground as if in the middle of a Chariot.

6. Mitra and Varuna, your hands are liberal, and you form excellent protectors, to him whom you save inside the sacrificial ground. You two, Kings, with accordant spirit uphold together the dominion based on a thousand pillars.

7. Its body is of gold its columns are of iron; it shines in the sky like lightning, the whip of cloud-horses or, it appears to be fixed like the sacrificial post in an auspicious field impregnated with the oil of oblations. May we share the sweet liquor that is inside this chariot.

8. O Mitra and Varuna, you mount your golden car with iron columns, at the break of the dawn and the rise of the sun. You thence behold the infinite (*Aditi*) and the finite (*Diti*).

9. Bountiful guardians of the world! Mitra and Varuna, bless us with happiness which is large, flawless and indestructible. Desiring wealth, may we wish to become victorious.

*Rigveda*. V 62

The Rishi of this hymn is Śaṅkara of the Atri family. Among the Āditya is, Mitra and Varuna are more often invoked together than the others.

"Mitra is the celestial light in its manifestation by day, while Varuna, though the lord of light and of all time, yet rules especially over the nightly heaven."

It is worth noticing "that this dual invocation is preserved in the *Zend-Avesta* in regard to Ahura and Mithra."

In the eighth verse *Diti* and *Aditi* are contrasted with one another, and probably include together the whole universe made up of that which is finite and visible and that which is infinite and invisible.

### SAYINGS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA.

1. As the same fish is dressed into soup, curry or cutlet, and each has his own choice dish of it, so the Lord of the Universe though one, manifests himself differently according to the different likings of His worshippers and each of these has his own view of God, which he values the most. To some he is a kind master or a loving father, a sweet smiling mother or a devout friend and to others a faithful husband or a dutiful and obliging son.

2. Let not thy mind be as the storehouse of the washerman. He fills his room with the unclean clothes of others, but when those clothes are clean and ready for use, they go to their respective owners, and he has nothing to call his own.

3. Bow down and adore where others do, for where so many hearts have been paying the tribute of adoration, the kind Lord must manifest himself, for He is all mercy.

4. A learned Brahmin once went over to a wise king and said "hear oh king I am well versed in the holy scriptures. I intend to teach thee the holy book of Bhâgavata." The king, who was the wiser of the two, well knew that a man who has really read the Bhâgavata would seek more to know his own self than the honor and wealth in a king's court. He replied, I see oh Brahmin that you yourself have not mastered the book thoroughly. I promise to make you my tutor, but go first and learn the scripture well. The Brahmin went his way thinking within himself "how foolish the king is to say I have not mastered the Bhâgavata well, when I have been reading the book over and over for all these years." However he went over the book once more carefully and appeared before the king. The king told him the same thing over again and sent him away. The Brahmin was sore vexed but thought, there must be some meaning for this behaviour of the king. He went home shut himself up in his closet, and applied himself more than ever to get over the book. By and by the hidden meanings began to flash before his intellect, the vanity of running after the bubbles, riches and honor, and kings and courts, and wealth and fame, all vanished before his unclouded vision. From that day forward he gave himself up entirely to attain perfection by the worship of God and never returned to the king. A few years after, the king thought of the Brahmin and went to his house to see what he was about. Seeing the Brahmin, all radiant with the divine light and love he fell upon

his knees and said "I see you have now arrived at the true meaning of the scriptures, I am ready to be thy disciple, if you will duly condescend to make me one."

5. As long as there is no breeze blowing we fan ourselves to alleviate heat, but when the breeze blows, for all men rich and poor, we give up fanning. We should persevere ourselves to reach our final goal as long as there is no help from above, but fortunately when that help comes to any, let him then stop labouring and persevering, otherwise not.

6. Question,—Where is God? How can we get to him? Answer,—There are pearls in the sea, one must dive deep again and again until he gets the pearls. So there is God in the world, you should persevere to see him.

7. How does the soul stay in the body? As the piston stays in a syringe.

8. How does a true lover see his God? He sees Him as his nearest and dearest relative, just as the shepherd women of Brindâvan saw in Sri Krishna not the Lord of the Universe (Jagannâtha) but their own beloved, (Gopinath).

9. A boat may stay in the water but water should not stay in the boat. An aspirant may live in the world but the world should not live in him.

10. He who thinks his spiritual guide to be a mere man, cannot derive any benefit from him.

11. What you think you should say. Let there be a harmony between your thoughts and words otherwise if you merely tell that God is your all in all while your mind has made the world its all in all you cannot derive any benefit thereby.

12. As one sugar is moulded into various forms so one God assumes various forms and is worshipped variously in various countries.

13. As when fishes are caught in a net some do not struggle at all but remain calm in the net, some again struggle hard to come out of the net, while a few are very happy in effecting their escape by rending the net, so there are three sorts of men, viz.—fettered (*Baddha*), struggling (*Mumukshu*) released (*Mukta*).

14. If in all the different religious systems of the world, there reigns the same god, then why does the same god appear different when viewed in different light by different religions. God is one, but many are his aspects. The head of a family, an individual person, is the father of one, the brother of a second and the husband of a third. The relation or aspects are different but the man is the same.

# The Brahnavadin

SATURDAY, 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 1896.

## KARMA.

The word *Karma* is now almost naturalised in the English language, and is fairly frequently used in discussions and writings bearing upon Indian philosophy and religion. The word is derived from a Sanskrit root which means to do, and ordinarily expresses the idea of work. But in Vedântic literature the word is seen to have three different meanings. In some places it means merely work; in other places it denotes that invisible something which, as the result of the actions performed in previous lives, goes to determine the nature and conditions of the present life; and in other places again it means the sacrifices and other rituals performed in accordance with the injunctions in the Vedas and our books of Law known as the *Smritis*. In the *Chhândogya-Upanishad* (I 3 5) "works which require strength" (वीर्यवन्ति कर्माणि) are spoken of, and the kind of work or *Karma* referred to is such as the "production of fire by rubbing, running a race, and the stringing of a strong bow." Elsewhere in the same *Upanishad* (IV. 14. 3), it is stated that, "as water does not cling to a lotus leaf, so no evil *Karma* clings to him who knows" the *Brahman*. Here *Karma* clearly refers to the invisible effect of good and evil deeds that, clinging to the soul, determine the nature of its future fate and embodiment. Again in another place (VII. 14. 1), we find the following:—"Prompted by desire memory learns the Vedic hymns (*Mantra*), performs *Karmas*, wishes to have sons and cattle, to have this world and the other." There can be no doubt that *Karma* here means the sacrificial ritual. To illustrate this varied use of the word *Karma* examples may be given from other *Upanishads* also. For instance in the *Bṛihadâraṇyaka* (II 4 11), it is stated that "the hands form the only source from which all *Karmas* proceed," and we are given to understand that the power of performing work is centred in the hand in the same way in which the feeling of touch is centred in the

skin, of taste in the tongue, of smell in the nose, and so on. Here the hands are declared to be the organs of work, and *Karma* means work in general. Again in the same work (IV. 4 23), it is stated that the eternal greatness of him, who has known the incomprehensible *Brahman* whose nature is to be described by 'No, no,' does not grow larger by *Karma*, nor does it become smaller. "Let man try to know its state, and, having known it, he is not sullied by any evil *Karma*." It may be easily seen that *Karma* here refers to the invisible effect of works that forms the inevitable heritage of souls in the state of embodied existence. In I. 51. 16, of this *Upanishad* we have this—"The world of men can be gained by a son only, not by any other *Karma*. By *Karma* the world of the fathers is gained, and by knowledge the world of the Devas." Here *Karma* means sacrificial ritual, and is contrasted with knowledge (*Vidyâ*). There are of course other passages in these *Upanishads* wherein *Karma* is used to mean one or other of these three things. In the *Taittirîya-Upanishad* also we may see the word *Karma* used to mean work in general, (e.g., I. 11. 2, and III. 10. 2); in another place (II. 5 1), although *Karma* may mean work in general, the context refers to the pre-determining effects of *Karma*, as the knowledge of *Brahman* is said to enable a man to "leave all evils behind in the body"; and in another place (II 8 3.), where "those who go to the Devas by means of *Karma*" are mentioned, *Karma* means Vedic sacrifice. In the *Mundaka-Upanishad* also we have this word used in a similar way in several places to mean one or other of the three things pointed out above. For example in one place (I. 18), where "the immortal" is said to be "produced out of *Karma*", the word in all probability means work in general indicating that the effect of what a man does lasts for ever; in other places, e.g., (I. 21. and 7), it clearly means sacrificial ritual, and again in other places (II 2.8), it means the predetermining effect of deeds. It is needless to multiply these examples from the *Upanishads*. It is however, necessary to point out that in the *Bhagavat Gîtâ* also this word has its three meanings (e.g., in III. 5, *Karma*=work in general; in XVIII 5, *Karma*=sacrificial ritual; and in IV. 14, *Karma*=the pre-determining influence of work).

It, therefore, goes without saying that to understand our Vedantic scriptures properly it is absolutely necessary to know with what particular

significance this word *Karma* is used in the various passages in which it occurs, for without such knowledge we are apt to go wrong in ascertaining the teachings of the Vedānta on the three topics signified by the word *Karma*. In Vedāntic discussions conducted by our Pandits confusion between the various conceptions denoted by this word is often noticeable, and in the *Brahma-Sūtras*, i.e., the Vedānta aphorisms the word rarely, if ever, seems to have been understood in the sense of work in general, although the *Mīmāṃsā* school of Indian philosophy uses it technically only in that sense. In this article we propose to summarise what appears to us to be the conclusion of the Vedānta (1) in regard to the invisible predetermining effect of work on the future fate and condition of the soul, (2) in regard to the performance of sacrificial rituals, and (3) in regard to the duty of all men living a life of work. We believe our readers have by this time made out that it is far from our intentions to dogmatise about religion or philosophy in these columns, although we wish fearlessly to state what appears to us to be the truth about the various subjects taken up for discussion from time to time.

The ordinarily accepted Vedāntic doctrine of *Karma* seems to rest on Scriptural texts like the following from the *Bṛihadgītanyaka-Upanishad*:—“Yājñavalkya, he (i.e., Ārtabhāga) said, ‘when this person (*vis*, the sage) dies, what does not leave him?’ ‘The name,’ he replied; ‘for the name is endless, the *Viśvedevas* are endless, and by it he gains the endless world.’ ‘Yājñavalkya,’ he said, ‘when the speech of this dead person enters into the fire, breath into the air, the eye into the sun .... where is then that person?’ Yājñavalkya said; ‘Take my hand, my friend Ārtabhāga. We two alone shall know of this; this question of ours is not for the people.’ Then they two went out and discussed, and what they spoke about was *Karma*, what they praised was *Karma*, saying that a man becomes good by good *Karma* and bad by bad *Karma*.” (III 2 12—13). From this extract two things become clear; firstly, when a person dies, his *Karma* does not ordinarily leave him; and secondly, a man becomes good by good *Karma* and bad by bad *Karma*, this becoming good or bad taking place apparently in another birth after death. Elsewhere (IV. 4 2—7), in this same *Upanishad* we find it stated that, when a man dies and departs, “both his knowledge (*Vidyā*) and work (*Karma*) take hold of him, as also his acquaintance with former things;” that his soul, “after having thrown off this body and dispelled all ignorance makes for itself another newer and more beautiful body”; and that, “according as he acts and according as he behaves, so will he become; a man of good acts becomes good, a man of bad acts becomes bad.” In this passage it is worth noticing that the doctrine of *Karma* and the doctrine of the reincarnation of the soul are both

stated in association; and we quote it on:—“And here they say that a person consists of desires. And as is his desire, so is his will; and as is his will, so is his deed, whatever work he does, that he obtains. And here there is this verse: ‘To whatever object a man’s knowing mind is attached to that, with attachment he goes together with his deed (*Karma*), and, having gone to the end (of the results) of whatever *Karma* he does here on earth, he returns again from that world to this world of action.’ So much for the man of desire. But then the man who does not desire, who, not desiring, freed from desires, is satisfied in his desires, and desires the *Ātman* only, his vital spirits do not go out to be moving hither and thither,—being *Brahman*, he goes to *Brahman*. Regarding this there is this verse: ‘when all the desires that have been in the heart are completely abandoned, then the mortal becomes immortal, and attains to *Brahman* here.’” We are thus taught how the burden of *Karma* on the back of the incarnating soul may be removed, and how unless it is removed the suffering soul has to get itself embodied again and again, become subject to a constant succession of births and deaths in this “world of action.” The knowledge of, and the aspiration after, the *Brahman* and the killing of the desires in the heart free the soul from the bondage of *Karma*, although it is true that generally no *Karma* is lost without its consequences being suffered by the agent of the said *Karma*. The *Vedānta-sūtras* (IV. 1. 15) point out further that this cancellation, through the knowledge of truth and through renunciation, of the predetermining and re-incarnating effect of works holds good only in the case of such works as have not yet begun to operate on the present embodied existence of the soul. Our expository writings on the Vedānta generally divide *Karma* into three classes; and they are—(1) *Sañchita-Karma* which is the stored up *Karma* of past lives that has not yet begun to operate on the present life, (2) *Prārabdha-Karma* which is that part of the past *Karma* which has already begun to operate on the present life, and (3) *Āgāmi-Karma* which is the *Karma* that is to come into existence in the future. The knowledge of truth and a pure unselfish desireless life are sufficient to destroy the stored up *Karma* of the past and to reduce the burden of the future *Karma* to nothing; but the results of the *Prārabdha-Karma* must be gone through either only during the present life as *Sankara* holds, or during more than one life, if necessary, as *Rāmānuja* holds. This is certainly not fatalism, for man’s happiness here and his higher divine destiny are both seen to be placed in his own hands.

Regarding the two other topics dealt with under the name of *Karma* in Vedāntic literature, namely, the performance of sacrificial rituals and the duty of all men to live a life of work, the literature itself gives evidence of there having

been contradictory opinions held by different thinkers and teachers. It may well be argued that, if all deeds have a binding effect upon the soul, the best thing for man to do is not to engage in works at all, and that sacrificial rituals are also works that bind the soul to undergo the interminable succession of births and deaths. The *Vedānta-Sūtrās* (IV. 1. 13—14.) tell us that *moksha* or the liberation of the soul from the bondage of matter is possible only when, through the attainment of the knowledge of truth, the consequences of evil as well as of good deeds do not affect the soul. Renunciation and self-denial are the only means for the attainment of *moksha*; and does renunciation mean also the renunciation of Vedic sacrifices and Brahmanical rituals? Before definitely answering this question it is desirable to see what the attitude of the *Upanishads* and the *Gītā* is towards these sacrifices and rituals. In the *Chhândogya-Upanishad* we have it stated (I. 1. 10.), that what a man does through the knowledge of Truth, with faith and devotion is more powerful than what is done otherwise. In it, in what is known as the *Udg'ṭha of the Dogs* (I. 12), there is a comparison of sacrificial priests to hungry dogs, thereby suggesting thoughts unfavourable to ceremonialism, in another place (VII. 14—26), we may see that sacrifices are made subordinate to the knowledge of *Brahman*; and in a third place (VIII. 5) sacrifices and fasting and retirement into forest are all said to consist in *Brahmacharya* self-restraint. In a passage of the *Bṛihadâraṇyaka Upanishad* already partially quoted it is said that by sacrifice (*Karma*) the world of the fathers is gained, and by knowledge (*Vidyâ*) the world of the Devas, and that "the world of the Devas is the best of worlds," and that "therefore they praise knowledge." Here the inferiority of rituals to true knowledge is quite emphatically declared; and moreover according to this *Upanishad* (VI. 2. 16.) "sacrifice, gifts, and austerity" lead a man to an inferior state of existence after death along the path of the Fathers. But it is in the *Mundaka-Upanishad* that we have the most characteristic declaration against ritualism. What is impliedly stated in the *Chhândogya* (VII. 1), namely, that the knowledge of the Vedas is inferior to the knowledge of the *Brahman*, is expressly declared in the *Mundaka* (I. 1. 3—5.); and in this *Upanishad* we find the following unmistakeable expression of opinion regarding the virtue of sacrifices (I. 2. 7—10) —"Fools, indeed, are those boats, the sacrifices—the eighteen, in which this lower ceremonial is told. Fools who praise this as the highest good are subject again and again to old age and death. Fools, dwelling in ignorance, taking themselves to be heroes, and feeling wise in their conceit, go round and round staggering to and fro like blind men led by the blind. . . . considering sacrifice and rituals as the best, these big fools know no higher good; and having enjoyed on the height of heaven the reward of good

works, they enter again this world or a lower one."

The *Bhagavad Gītā* also seems to hold very similar views in regard to Vedic ritualism (II. 42—46), wherein, among other things, it is said, "All the Vedas are as useful to an enlightened knower of *Brahman* as is a tank in a place covered all over with water." In another place in the *Gītā* (IX. 20—21.), we find this:—"The knowers of the three Vedas, the drinkers of the *Soma*, purified from sin sacrifice with sacrifices and wish to go to heaven (*Svarga*); they reach the auspicious world of the god Indra and enjoy in heaven the celestial enjoyments of the gods. They, having enjoyed that spacious heavenly world, come back, when their merit gets exhausted, to the world of mortals. Following thus the injunctions of the three Vedas and desiring desires, they obtain that which comes and goes." In spite of such expressions of opinion regarding ritualism to be found in the *Gītā* and the *Upanishads*, the *Vedānta Sūtras* say that the observance of Brahminical rituals is necessary even for the attainment of the knowledge that leads to *Moksha* (III. 4. 26 and IV. 1. 16.) The former of the aphorisms here referred to compares rituals to the harness of a horse which is intended to serve as a means of swift locomotion. Without the harness the horse cannot be used well to serve its purpose; and so without rituals knowledge of Truth alone cannot lead to *Moksha*. If by this it is simply meant that acts of worship form a necessary part of all religion, there can be no doubt of its accuracy and truthfulness. But what is intended to be understood is that the Religion of the Vedānta is dependent upon Vedic ritualism. In the *Upanishads* it is nowhere declared that the *Dvijas*, the twice-born Indian Aryas, alone are entitled to the acquisition of *Brahmavidyâ*—the knowledge of God and the Truth. On the other hand we may find contrary indications therein. The *Gītā* forms a part of the *Mahâbhârata*, and this work is said to have been specially intended for the enlightenment of women, *Sûdras*, and the inferior kind of twice-born Aryan men who are all prohibited from learning the three Vedas. None but the twice-born Aryas of India are allowed to have the privilege of studying the Vedas and of performing the Brahminical rituals; and can we then say that these alone are entitled to have the knowledge of God and to obtain *Moksha* in the teeth of what the scriptures say to the contrary? We have it in the *Gītā*,—"Wise men look alike upon a learned and courteous Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, and upon even a dog and the lowest outcast (V. 18.);"—"Those who are born of sin, and even women, *Vaiśyas*, and *Sûdras*, if they take refuge with me, even they reach the highest goal (IX. 32.)" The way in which the *Vedānta-Sūtras* try to narrow the catholicity of the Vedānta seems to us to be unsupported by any higher authority; and the body of the aphorisms is not altogether unaware of it. An aphorism (III. 4. 6), says that it may be seen that certain knowers of

*Brahman* live, without harm, altogether given up rituals, and another (III 4 36), holds that even those, who have not obeyed the Brahminical legal regulations of life and of its division into stages, are seen to have obtained the knowledge of *Brahman*. The *Upanishads* do not seem to decide this vexed question bearing on ritualism in either way definitely, but the decision of the *Gîtâ* thereon is very liberal and may be stated thus:— Those, that believe in the efficacy and the obligatoriness of the performance of the Vedic sacrifices and the rituals of the Law, and are qualified to perform them, are expected to do so without desires and attachment to results under the impression that even these ritualistic performances are in the service of God (vide *B. G.*, XVIII 3—6). This opinion seems to derive something like support from a passage (IV. 4. 22), in the *Bṛhadâraṇyaka-Upanishad* also. Then, those, who are qualified for the performance of Vedic rituals, and would therefore be expected to perform them, may themselves have no faith in the efficacy and usefulness of such works of worship; and to them perfect freedom is allowed in relation to the choice of their own methods and works of worship. “In whatsoever way men approach me in that same way do I accept them O Pârtha, from all sides men go along My path (*B. G.*, IV. 11).” And those who are not qualified in accordance with the Brahminical Law for the performance of Vedic rituals—even they may take refuge with God and reach the highest goal (*B. G.*, IX. 32). Indeed among the many forms of sacrifices or acts of worship mentioned in the *Gîtâ* the sacrifice of silent meditation and repetition (*Japa-Yagna*), is held to be the best (*B. G.*, X. 25). Above all, even the worship of other gods is not here objected to. “They also who, devoted to other Gods, worship them with faith, even they, O Kaunteya, worship Me in a way which is contrary to the prescribed rule” (*B. G.*, IX. 23).

Let us now consider the teaching of the Vedânta on the third subject denoted by *Karma*. The *Bhagavad Gîtâ* teaches us the gospel of work, and tells us quite emphatically that unselfish work is the best means of divine worship. Huxley says in his *Evolution and Ethics*, “The Vedas and the Homeric epos set before us a world of rich and vigorous life, full of joyous fighting men

That ever with a frolic welcome took  
The thunder and the sunshine

and who were ready to brave the very gods themselves when their blood was up. A few centuries pass away, and under the influence of civilisation the descendants of these men are ‘sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought’—frank pessimists, or, at best, make-believe optimists. . . . . The hero has become a monk. The man of action is replaced by the quietist whose highest aspiration is to be the passive instrument of the divine Reason.” This view of the effect of the development of Indian philosophic thought on the life of the people is admittedly derived from Buddhistic sources; and nobody can deny that, under the

influence of the extreme pessimism and the rigorous ascetic discipline of Buddhism, the hero does become a monk. It is easy enough to find a few passages in some of the *Upanishads*, also wherein renunciation is interpreted to mean the same thing as retirement from the activities of life into solitude and silent thought. But the true spirit of the Vedânta is to combine harmoniously the true life of renunciation with the true life of active work. The *Bhagavad Gîtâ* tells us that even during the days of Sri Krishna there were wise men who were of opinion that all work should be abandoned as being full of evil (XVIII. 13). We have already tried to see how natural such an opinion is, if it be borne in mind that, ordinarily, work forges material bonds for the otherwise free soul of man and prevents it from attaining liberation. The Vedânta, however, informs us that work without attachment cannot forge any such bonds, and that work is as much a duty in life as renunciation. “All this, whatsoever moves on earth, is worthy to be inhabited by the lord. Therefore enjoy life by resignation. Yet a man should wish to live a hundred years performing works.” In this injunction of the *Isâvâsya-Upanishad* to combine strenuous work with steady self-denial, the *Vedânta-sûtras* seem to see it stated that Vedic rituals are conducive to the Vedântic knowledge of Truth (III 4 13—14). The *Gîtâ* certainly understands the *Upanishad* better when it says (VI. 1). “He who performs the work that he has to do, unattached to the fruit of action, he is the *Sanyâsin* and he is the *Yogin*; not he that is without fire, nor he that does no work.” To be without fire is to be incapable of performing the sacrifices and rites prescribed by the Brahminical Law, and to do no work is to follow the ideal of quietism. Neither by merely giving up ritualism, nor by following quietism, does a man adjust his life in accordance with Vedântic injunctions; to do that he has to find renunciation in work and work in renunciation (*B. G.*, IV. 18), and has to fight the battle of life, as Arjuna of old was called upon to fight the battles of the Bhârata-war, surrendering all actions to God, with thoughts directed towards God, without desire and without egoism, and freed from all fever of the mind. (*B. G.*, III. 30).

## Translations.

LIGHT OF GRACE

OR

TIRUVARUTPAYAN.

OF UMA'PATI SIVA'CHA'RYA.

(Continued from page 80)

2. The eternal souls will attain Divine Nature by His Arul Sakti (Grace or Love) which is One with our Lord

NOTES.

The soul is here called eternal or unchangeable, as in its essence it remains the same, though its form



and *karma* in the mental and animal planes are continually changing. Lytton in his 'Strange Story' compares, by a happy thought, the soul to a steady white central light and the mental (*Antahkarana*) and animal or sensory planes to ever-changing red and blue lights surrounding the central light.

*Sakti* is the *chit* of the compound '*Satchidanandam*'. This *Sakti*, is the power of *Sat*, 'That which exists' or its other aspect, in which aspect alone, God is manifest to the world and all created beings, and the relation of God to the world is made possible by this Power in its aspect of Intelligence *Chit* or *Gnānam* or Grace or Love. In His aspect of Divine Force, or energy, *Kriyā Sakti*, He acts on *Māya* or *Mulaprakriti* and starts creation or evolution.

Hence God is called '*Gnāna Kriya Svarūpan*'

3 In His greatness, in His subtlety, in His boundless Grace, in the priceless benefit He confers on man, He is beyond all comparison.

#### NOTES.

He is great and subtle and hence called *Brahman*; He is all Love and hence called *Sivam*; He is beneficent and hence called *Sankar*.

Greatness and littleness are terms derived from quantity and hence relative to matter. He is the greatest of the great as he must envelope everything contained in space. He is least of the least as He must be present in the least conceivable atom. But the terms do not describe His real nature and hence liable to cause error in thought, as these are not terms to describe what is Pure Intelligence and All Love. Hence the superiority of the terms *Sivam* and *Sankar*. In no other religions have we specific terms naming God as All Love and All Benevolence.

4 He it is who originates everything, sustains it, and when everything is destroyed and resolved into its primordial *Mala*, He alone remains, the last Refuge from which there is no return.

#### NOTES.

God is here shown as the author of *Panchakṛtyas*, *Sṛishti*, *Sthiti*, *Samharam*, *Droupava*, and *Anugraha*. It is further implied that these functions are not different and carried on by different Beings and at different times. The first three involve mere change, *Samharam*; the fourth is temporary rest and the fifth is eternal rest in Bliss. The ordinary conception of the *Trimūrtis* do not give a place for the last two functions of the Supreme.

The *Upanishads* distinctly recognize *Brahman* or *Sivam* as *Thuriyam*, the fourth "*Chaturtham*" *Adwaitam*, 'One without a second'.

"*Sivam adwaitam satam, chaturtham manyante*" — *Ramatāpani-Upanishad*

(To be continued)

## A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE VEDĀNTA PHILOSOPHY ACCORDING TO ŚANKARA.

Translated from Dr. Deussen's *System des Vedānta*.

By A. W. SMART.

### I. INTRODUCTION.

1. The fundamental idea of the *Vedānta*, as shortly expressed in the Vedic words, '*Tat tuam asi*,' 'That thou art' and '*Aham brahma asmi*,' 'I am *Brahman*,' is the identity of *Brahman* and the soul. This means that *Brahman*, the eternal principle of all Being, the power, which creates, supports and again withdraws into itself all worlds, is identical with the *Ātman*, the self or the soul, that is in us, which we with right knowledge recognise as our very self, as our inner and true being. This soul of each one of us is not a part, an emanation of *Brahman*, but fully and wholly the eternal, indivisible *Brahman* itself.

2 *Contradiction by experience*. This dogma contradicts experience (*vyavahāra*) which does not exhibit any such unity, but rather a plurality (*nānātā*), an extension (*prapancha*) of names and forms (*nāmarūpa*); impressions, that is, of ear and eye, sense impressions and, as belonging to them, this self of ours encased in a built up and perishable body.

3. *Contradiction by the law of works*. The dogma also contradicts the canon of Vedic ritual, which, whilst teaching that the soul lives after the body has perished, yet assumes a plurality of individual souls differentiated from *Brahman*, and that these souls held in a never-ending series of migrations (*samsāra*) pass, after death, again and again, into some other new body and that the works (*karma*) of any one life condition by necessity the next following life and its nature.

4 *Ignorance and Knowledge*. Experience, as the result of worldly knowledge (*pramāna*), of perception (*pratyaksha*), of inference (*anumāna*), &c. on the canon of Vedic ritual, with its commands and prohibitions, its promises and threats, rest both on a false knowledge (*mithyājñāna*), an innate illusion (*bhrānti*), which is called *Āvidyā*—Ignorance. Its dicta, like dreams, are only true so long as we are not awake. We may more readily understand what this '*Āvidyā*' is when we remember that the *Ātman*, the soul, the self, is not able to differentiate itself from the *upādhis* or limitations (that is the body, physical organs and works). The soul is clothed in these *upādhis*, and whilst the body alone perishes at death the rest accompany the soul in its migrations. To this *Āvidyā*, *Ādip*, that is, knowledge, stands opposed, sometimes called the universal knowledge (*samvāghosana*). By means of this knowledge the *Ātman* differentiates itself from the *upādhis* and recognises that they owe their existence to *Āvidyā*, as a delusion (*mitha*), as an illusion (*abhimāna*), itself however as ident

ed with the one indivisible *Brahman*, comprehending all things in itself.

5. *Source of knowledge.* The *samyaqdarśana*, the universal knowledge (proceeding from all sides to a point) cannot be acquired through the ordinary methods (*pratyakṣa*, *anumāna*, &c.), nor through the Vedic canon of duty, because both are rooted in *Avidyā* and cannot go beyond. The only source of *Vidyā* is revelation, *Śruti* (generally translated, not quite correctly, scripture), that is, the Veda, and then only that part dealing with knowledge (*jñāna-kānda*) in contradistinction to the part dealing with works (*Karma-kānda*). Scattered through the *Mantras* and *Brāhmanas* are found certain sections called *Upanishads* treating of this knowledge, and, as they are generally found at the end of the *Brāhmanas*, their teaching is called the *Vedānta* (end of the Veda). The whole Veda without distinction of the parts dealing with works and knowledge, comprising the whole collection of *Mantras* (hymns and aphorisms), the *Brāhmanas* (theological expositions) and the *Upanishads* are of divine origin, were 'breathed out' by *Brahman* and only 'seen by intuition' by their human authors. The universe and the gods pass away, but the Veda is eternal; it outlasts the destruction of the world and remains latent in the Spirit of *Brahman*. In accordance with the words of the Veda, which contain the eternal archetype of things, the gods, men, animals, &c., are created by *Brahman* at the commencement of each world-period; and the Veda is then revealed through 'expiration'—the part dealing with works as a canon of actions having prosperity (*abhyudaya*) for their end, and the part dealing with knowledge, as the source of the *samyaqdarśana*, the sole fruit of which is, happiness, that is, salvation. This universal knowledge is not reached through reflection (*tarka*), and still less through tradition or *smṛiti* (comprising the *Śāstras*, *Kapila*, *Manu*, the *Mahābhārata*, &c.); reflection and *smṛiti* can only be in a secondary sense considered as sources of truth, so far, that is, as they are useful in explaining and completing the revelation contained in the Veda.

## II. THEOLOGY.

6. *Higher and lower knowledge.* The aim of man (*puruṣārtha*) is salvation, consisting in the cessation of the soul's migrations, and may be accomplished when man recognises that his own self (*ātman*) is identical with the highest self (*Param-Ātman*), that is with *Brahman*. The whole aim of *Vidyā* is the knowledge of *Ātman* or *Brahman*, which are interchangeable terms. There are however two sciences of *Brahman*—the higher science (*parāvidyā*) ending in *samyaqdarśana* and the fruit whereof is salvation, and the lower science (*aparāvidyā*), aiming not at knowledge but at the worship of *Brahman*, and the fruit of which, in accordance with each step of the worship, is partly the increase of works (*karma-samriddhi*), partly prosperity (*abhyudaya*) either heavenly or appertaining to the next birth, and partly *kramamuktī* or steps towards salvation. The object of the higher science is the higher *Brahman* (*param-brahma*), that of the

lower science the lower *Brahman* (*aparam-brahma*).

7. *Higher and lower Brahman.* Scripture distinguishes two forms (*rūpa*) of *Brahman*, the higher, without attributes (*nirgunam*, *nirgunam*) and the lower, possessing attributes (*aparam*, *sagunam*). In the first sense, it is taught that *Brahman* is without attributes (*guna*), difference (*vishesha*), form (*ākāra*) and limitation (*upādhi*); in the second, where worship is the object, attributes, difference, form and limitation belong to *Brahman*.

8. *Difference between the two.* One and the same object cannot be with and without attributes, with and without form in itself (*svatva*). *Brahman* is without attributes, form, difference and limitation, but becomes the lower *Brahman* when *Avidyā* imposes on it, for the purpose of worship, the limitations or *upādhis*. The imposition on *Brahman* of *upādhis* is only an illusion (*bhrama*), just as it is an illusion to look upon a crystal as red when it merely reflects a red colour. As the transparency of the crystal is not damaged by the red colour, so the essence of *Brahman* is not changed by the limitations, imposed on it by *Avidyā*.

9. *The incomprehensible nature of the Higher Brahman.* The higher *Brahman* is in its nature without attributes (*nirguna*) without form (*nirākāra*), without difference (*nirvishesha*) and without limitations (*nirupādhi*). It is neither coarse nor subtle, neither short nor long, not to be heard, not to be felt, without form, imperishable, it is neither thus nor thus; that is, no form, no representation gives an idea of its essence. It is different from what we know and from what we do not know. "Words and thoughts turn round it without finding it", and the wise *Bahva* met the question concerning its essence by silence.

10. *The Essence of the Higher Brahman.* The only thing that can be said of this *Brahman* without attributes is that it is not 'is not'. So far it is existence (*sat*); but taken in an empirical sense it is rather non-being. The scripture further defines the essence of *Brahman* as through and through pure thought-intelligence (*chaitanya*), and compares it to the through and through salt taste imparted to water in which a lump of salt has been dissolved. This does not mean that a double character is attributed to *Brahman*; the one quality is identical with the other in so far that existence is intelligence and intelligence is existence. Bliss (*ānanda*), which the later Vedānta adds as the third predicate in the name *Sachchidānanda* of *Brahman*, will be hereafter seen to be a characteristic of the attributeless *Brahman*. It is not however usually mentioned when the essence of *Brahman* is spoken of, perhaps, because bliss is only a negative quality and is regarded simply as absence of pain, which alone befits *Brahman*; for 'What is different from Him is full of pain.'

11. *Brahman as Soul.* The difficulty of recognising this attributeless *Brahman* depends on the fact that it is the inner self (*antar-ātman*) in every being; as such it is on one side the most certain of all things and cannot be denied by any one; on the other side, however, it is not discernible,



because it functions as subject (*sākṣin*) in every thought and can never be observed as object. It may, however, be discerned by the wise when in the state of *samādhi* or perfect meditation, consisting in the withdrawal of all organs from all outward objects and in a concentration into one's own inner being. On the consciousness that one's self is this attributeless *Brahman* and on the conviction accompanying, of the nothingness of the plurality of names and forms, depends the salvation of the individual.

12 *The Lower Brahman* The higher *Brahman* becomes the lower (*aparam-brahma*) when circumscribed by pure (*niruddha*) or complete (*niratisaya*) limitations. The lower *Brahman* may be recognised whenever the scripture ascribes limitations, attributes, forms or difference to it. This happens when the goal is not knowledge, but worship (*upāsā*), and the fruit of this worship, as well as that of works, which is placed in the same category, is not salvation (*mokṣa*, *mṛtyuśānti*), but happiness or prosperity (*ubhaya*)—a happiness greater than the heavenly but limited to the time of migrations. The lordship in heaven, however, which may be reached after death by means of the worship of the lower *Brahman* and of the *Kāmanukṛti*, or steps in salvation, leads eventually to *Samyaktva* and thus to complete salvation. Not at once, however, as the worshipper of the lower *Brahman* does not wholly get rid of *Ādya*. It is Ignorance, *Ādya*, which imposes limitations on the higher *Brahman* and turns it into the lower *Brahman*. The nature of *Brahman* is as little changed by these limitations as the clearness of crystal by the colours which it reflects, or as the sun by the moving reflections of itself in water; or as space in which bodies are burning or in motion. The many picturesque representations given us of the lower *Brahman* may be divided into three groups; the pantheistic *Brahman* as the world-soul; the psychological as the individual soul, and the theistic as the personal God.

13 *The Lower Brahman as world-soul* The most important passages referring to the first group are found in the *Chhândogya-Upanishad*, 3, 14, where *Brahman* is called 'all working, all wishing, all smelling, all tasting (the principle of action and sense perception), the all embracing, silent, untroubled,' and in the *Mândūkya-Upanishad*, 2, 1, 1, where the moon and the sun are said to be his eyes, his ears, the heavenly places, the wind his breath and so on. In this same connection *Brahman* is regarded as the source of all light, as the light on the other side of heaven and in the heart, as the ether, from which all things proceed; as he who is the cause of names and forms, as the life from which all beings spring; in whom the world trembling moves, as the internal guide, as the principle of the world-order; as the bridge which keeps the worlds apart so that they may not rush into one another; as he by whom sun and moon, heaven and earth, minutes, hours, years and days are kept apart and finally as the world destroyer, who absorbs into itself all created things.

14 *The Lower Brahman as individual soul*. In contrast with the greatness of space necessitated by these representations, we have numerous instances in which the minuteness of *Brahman* is expressed as suiting a *Brahman* regarded as the psychic principle in the individual; as such he dwells in the fortress of the body; in the lotus of the heart, as a dwarf, a span large, a thumb high, smaller than a mustard seed, the size of the point of a needle; as the principle of life; as witness; as the man in the eye and so on.

15 *The Lower Brahman as personal God* These representations of the *Brahman* with attributes culminate in the apprehension of it as *Īśvara* the personal God. This idea is comparatively seldom found in the Upanishads and still less seldom developed (*Īśa*, 1, *Bṛh.*, 4, 4, 22, *Kaṇḍa*, 3, 8, *Kātha*, 4, 12). In the system of the Vedānta on the other hand it plays an important role; it is *Īśvara* by whose approval the soul migrations take place and it is by his grace that the knowledge which saves is conditioned; he decrees for the soul its work and suffering whilst taking into consideration the works of previous births, by which the fate of the new life is determined; just as the rain produces plants from the seed, and in accordance with the nature of each. The personification of *Brahman* as *Īśvara* or Lord, contrasted with the world as that which is to be ruled, is expressly limited to the point of view of the cosmos as rooted in *Ādya*. The cosmos however in the highest sense has no reality.

## Correspondence.

### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S WORK IN AMERICA

NEW YORK, January 12th, 1896

Mr. Editor,—

The wonderful success, which the Swami Vivekananda has achieved in spreading the religious and philosophical ideas of the Hindus in our country, may lead one to the erroneous conclusion that this happy result is due to a coincidence of favourable circumstances, rather than to the extraordinary ability of the agent chosen by destiny to carry out this difficult task. It is only by studying the *fin de siècle* condition of our country, by taking cognizance of the antagonistic forces that had to be coped with, and considering the numerous difficulties to be overcome in this attempt, that we come to fully appreciate the grandeur of the work accomplished, and to realize that the great success accompanying it is solely due to the personality of the agent, to his extraordinary moral, intellectual, and spiritual endowments, and to his exceptional energy and will-power, and to no other cause whatever.

It is true that, on the occasion of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, many of your countrymen succeeded in calling the attention of the world to the Light from the East, and caused a religious

wave to pass over our country, but this wave would have died away as quickly as it had come, without leaving any lasting effect, had it not been for the efforts of this one man who, with the tenacity so characteristic of your great *Sampsons* in spreading spiritual knowledge, unflinchingly persisted in ingrafting your religious ideas on our Western materialism; and never rested until his work was crowned with well deserved success. So that, if now others come to take up his work they will have a relatively easy task to perform, as they will find the ground well prepared, and the minds ready for the acceptance of true religious teachings.

It is easy to write on a blackboard once it has been cleansed from the dust covering it, and all the traces of former uncouth writing have been effaced from its surface; but when the blackboard is covered with the accumulated dust of ages and disfigured by thousands of the oddest characters that have left their imprint upon it, the task becomes more difficult, if not impossible. The loftiest sentiment, the highest knowledge, the sublimest truth would only be written in vain; if it did not run the greater danger of being misinterpreted or identified with the absurdities left from previous writings. The American mind resembles such a blackboard. It is coated with thick layers of superstition and bigotry that have come down from the oldest times, and there is no humbug, no charlatanism, no imposition which has not left here its impression, its *samskâra*, to use a technical expression of your philosophy. You know how difficult it is to eradicate these *samskâras*. We Americans are a very receptive nation; and this is why our country has become the hot-bed of all kinds of religious and irreligious monstrosities that ever sprang from a human brain. There is no theory so absurd, no doctrine so irrational, no claim so extravagant, no fraud so transparent that it cannot find here numerous believers and—a ready market. This morbid craving for the abnormal, the occult, the sensational, has, at the end of this nineteenth century of the Christian era practically brought about a revival of the Middle Ages. To satisfy this craving, long forgotten superstitions, of the past have been ransacked, Nostradamus, Agrippa, Paracelsus, Cagliostro, and all the cranks and conscious or unconscious impostors that ever contributed to retard human evolution, have been unearthed and dressed up in modern fashion, and hundreds of societies and sects have been given birth to, to feed the credulity of the people and, in turn, draw support therefrom. The whole atmosphere is here in some places filled with hobgoblins, spooks, and *Mahâtmas* (who, by the way, according to the latest statement of a representative Theosophist, have now emigrated to the North Pole—it seems you Hindus have made it too hot for them in your country); and new prophets are rising every day in Israel, sent from some great hierophant of the "Brotherhood of the Motherhood of the Golden Candelabra" and similar known and unknowable Gobi and Himalaya dwellers to start some new sect for the salvation of the world, and pocket from \$25 to \$100 initiation fee from fools ready to pay it.

In this Bullium of religious cranks of all shades and colour, in this devil's kitchen of fraud, imposture, and knavery, the Swami appeared to teach the lofty religion of the Vedas, the profound philosophy of the Vedânta the sublime wisdom of your ancient Rishis. The most unfavourable conditions, indeed, for such an undertaking, the worst possible environment for such a task! Before even starting this great mission, it was necessary to first perform the Herculean labor of cleansing this Augean stable of imposture, superstition and bigotry, a task sufficient to discourage the bravest heart, to dispirit the most powerful will. But the Swami was not the man to be deterred by difficulties. Poor and friendless, with no other support than God and his love for mankind, he set patiently to work, determined not to give up until the message he had to deliver would find a receptacle in the hearts of truth-seeking men and women.

In the beginning, crowds of people flocked to his lectures. But they were not of the kind that a teacher of religion would be pleased to have for his auditors. They consisted partly of curiosity-seekers who were more interested in the personality of the preacher than in what he had to preach, partly of the representatives of the cranky and fraudulent elements mentioned before, who thought they had found in the Swami a proper tool to forward their interests. Most if not all of this latter type of persons tried to induce him to embrace their cause, first by promises of their support, and then by threats of injuring him if he refused to ally himself with them. But they were all grievously disappointed. For the first time, they had met with a man who could be neither bought nor frightened—"trafil kosa na kampani," "the sickle had hit on a stone," as the Polish proverb says. To all these propositions, his only answer was and is—"I stand for Truth. Truth will never ally itself with falsehood. Even if all the world should be against me, Truth must prevail in the end!" He denounced fraud and superstition in whatever guise they appeared, and all those untrue and erratic existences, like bats at the approach of daylight, hid themselves in their haunts before this apostle of truth.

Of our friends the Christian missionaries, with their numerous adherents and *tutti quanti*, I need not say much. Their general methods and tactics are well known. They would have liked it ever so much to have the Swami preach Christianity, and a Christianity too as they understood it. But "leider hat's nicht sollen sein; it could not, should not be," as runs the refrain to the German Folks' song. In his lectures, when referring to Christ, he spoke of him with the reverence due to this great personality but always adhered strictly to the maxim, "*amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*". Indifferent to the filthy stories they set in circulation about him, he peacefully continued to preach God, and Love, and Truth, and their gossip had the only effect to advertise his lectures, and gain him the sympathy of all fair-minded people.

A worthier antagonist, though not one commensurate with his strength, he had to meet in another class of people, the so-called free-thinkers, embracing the atheists, materialists, agnostics, rationalists, and all those who, on principle, are averse to anything that smells of religion. They thought this Hindu monk was an easy match for them, and that all his theology would be crushed under the weight of Western civilisation, Western philosophy, and Western science. So sure were they of their triumph, that they invited him, in New York, to lecture before their Society, anxious to show to their numerous followers how easily religious claims can be refuted by the powerful arguments of their logic and pure reasoning. I shall never forget that memorable evening when the Swami, accepting the challenge, appeared, single-handed, to face the matadores of materialism, all arrayed with their heaviest armour of law, and reason, and logic, and common-sense, of matter, and force, and heredity, and all the stock phrases calculated to awe and terrify the ignorant mass. Imagine their surprise and consternation when they found that, far from being intimidated by these big words, he proved himself a master in wielding their own weapons, and as familiar with the arguments of materialism, as with those of the Advaita philosophy. He showed them that their much vaunted Western civilisation consisted principally in the development of the art to destroy their fellowmen, that their Western science could not answer the most vital questions of life and being, that their immutable laws, so much talked of, had no outside existence apart from the human mind, that the very idea of matter was a metaphysical conception, and that it was the much despised metaphysics upon which ultimately rested the very basis of their materialism. With an irresistible logic he demonstrated that their knowledge proved itself incorrect, not by comparison with knowledge which is true, but by the very laws upon which it depends for its basis, that pure reasoning could not help admitting its own limitations and pointed to something beyond reason; and that rationalism when carried to its last consequences must ultimately land us at a something which is above matter, above force, above sense, above thought and even consciousness, and of which all these are but the manifestations—"Him the sun cannot express, nor the moon, nor the stars, the lightning cannot express Him, nor the fire; through Him they all shine."

The powerful effect of this lecture could be seen on the following day, when numbers of the materialistic camp came to sit at the feet of the Hindu monk, and listen to his sublime utterances on God and religion.

Thus after eliminating all the morbid and fraudulent elements, the Swami gathered around himself, from among the most heterogeneous classes of society a large and ever increasing following of sincere men and women animated with the only desire to pursue truth for truth's own sake.

In this letter I have tried to delineate the negative part, as it were, of the Swami's work. He had first to clear the ground and lay a deep foundation for the grand edifice to be built. In my next letter I shall try to give an idea of the plan of this edifice and the rapid progress of the work.

K.

## Motes and Thoughts.

For purposes of clear distinction we propose to use in our columns the word *Brahman* to indicate the Self which is "One only without a second" and *Brahmin* to denote the highest caste of the Aryas in India or any individual member thereof; *Brâhmana* will denote that part of Vedic literature which is so named, and *Brahmâ* that one of the Hindu trinity of gods who is said to preside over creation.

From knowledge springs final liberation; it is not attainable without knowledge; so the wise declare. Wherefore a man should seek after true knowledge, whereby he may deliver himself from birth and death. Constantly obtaining knowledge from a Brahmin, a Kshatriya, a Vaishya or a lowly Sûdra, a man should always practise faith; birth and death do not affect him who has faith. All castes are Brahminical and spring from Brahman, and they all constantly utter the sacred word (*Brahman*). Having an understanding of this sacred word, I declare to thee the reality, the scripture;—this entire universe is Brahman. ... From ignorance men adopt this or that source of action and as they proceed into non-existence, so the castes destitute of knowledge fall from dire ignorance into a net of natural births. Wherefore knowledge is to be sought every where, wherever existing, as I have told thee. The Brahmin or whosoever else stands on it has, they declare, eternal redemption—*Yājñavalkya in the Mahābhārata*.

*Karma* or the erratic-activity by the three-fold means of thought, word and deed, is of two kinds *Punya* and *Pāpa*. *Punya* or righteous action is manifold as being the means of attaining various limited enjoyments here and hereafter. *Pāpa* or sinful action is of infinite kinds as, doing what is forbidden, omission to do what is commanded, offences against God, offences against the godly and insufferable offences of various nature, with reference to time, place, intention or disposition.

—*Varadarāma*

For Will in his deeds,  
And deeds make Karma, and the Karma makes  
The outcome. As when ye press the clay  
This way and that, and see it harden, so  
Men for themselves shape Fate. Shadow and Light  
Are not more surely tied each unto each  
Than Man to Karma, and to Karma Man

—*Lal*

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